**Employment Security Advisory Committee**

ESD logo-2 color-hori

|  |
| --- |
| **Meeting details** |
| **Date:** Thursday, March 14, 2019  **Time:** 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.  **Location:** Employment Security Department Maple Park Building, Maple Leaf Room   |  |  | | --- | --- | | **Committee members present** | **Committee members absent** | | * Mark Johnson * Linda Nguyen (by phone) * John Tirpak (by phone) | * Bob Batttles * Larry Brown * Mike Gempler * Joe Kendo * Mark Riker | |  |  | |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | **ESD staff present** | | | * Dan Zeitlin * Tim Gates * Bianca Stoner |  | |
| **Summary** |
| **Welcome and introductions**  Dan Zeitlin, the Employment Security Department (ESD) Director of Employment System Policy, led the introductions and explained that he would facilitate the meeting because Cami Feek was unable to attend.  **ESD federal shutdown response** Dan Zeitlin gave an overview of ESD’s response to the recent partial federal shutdown. Although there are around 74,000 federal workers in Washington, a smaller number (approximately 21%) were affected by the recent partial federal shutdown. The shutdown, which lasted for 34 days, was the longest in U.S. history.  To assist claimants as much as possible, ESD quickly implemented some new processes such as setting up a special team to handle unemployment insurance applications from affected federal workers and implementing agency-wide efforts to overcome obstacles that these workers faced.  Many federal workers were classified as “excepted employees,” which meant that they were required to work during the shutdown but did not get paid. Several other states quickly passed laws giving excepted employees the right to apply for unemployment benefits. ESD wrote an emergency rule to include these workers in the definition of “unemployed” so that the agency could pay benefits, but the shutdown ended within hours after the rule went into effect.  ESD served a total of around 2,300 federal workers during the shutdown. After the shutdown ended, federal workers received back pay, so now ESD is in the process of collecting that money.  Overall, the experience was good training for ESD’s efforts regarding economic cycle planning. It’s likely that in the future ESD will need to quickly react to other sudden, unpredictable events that require us to make rapid changes to rules, policies and procedures, so we viewed this experience as a training opportunity.  **Legislative session update**  Bianca Stoner, ESD Legislative and Executive Policy Analyst, gave an overview of the bills that ESD is running or tracking in this year’s legislative session.  The agency is running three bills: E2SSB 5438 (regarding the H-2A temporary agricultural program), SHB 1399 (regarding Paid Family and Medical Leave), and ESB 5439 (regarding ESD records and data). Since the date of the ESAC meeting, the Paid Family and Medical Leave bill passed, and the Governor will sign the bill on Wednesday, April 3rd. The other two bills are continuing to move.  In addition to the three bills that ESD is running, the agency is closely watching several additional bills, including but not limited to:   * **Career-connected learning** – [E2SSB 5327](https://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=5327&Chamber=Senate&Year=2019): Under this Governor’s Office request bill, ESD would be a member of a cross-agency work group, administer career-connected learning grants, and collaborate with other agencies to expand career-connected learning. * **Domestic violence resources in the workplace** – [HB 1533](https://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=1533&Initiative=false&Year=2019):   The bill would require ESD to create a poster regarding domestic violence and to make the poster available to employers. Although the bill requires employers to display the poster in the workplace, the bill does not create any enforcement mechanism.   * **Long-term care trust** –[2SHB 1087](https://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=1087&Initiative=false&Year=2019):   The bill creates a state program to provide long-term care benefits with funding from employee payroll premiums, which ESD would assess and collect.   * **Non-union apprentice work search** – [SB 5398](https://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=5398&Chamber=Senate&Year=2019):   This bill, which passed out of the Senate unanimously, provides a work search waiver to non-union electrical apprentices.   * **Working Families Tax Credit** – HB 1527:   Under this bill, low- and moderate-income families could apply to ESD for a rebate of up to ten percent of their federal Earned Income Tax Credit.  **Economic update** Steven Ross, ESD’s Director of Labor Market Information, gave an economic update. Since the recent recession, Washington state has gained over 591,000 jobs, with the largest area of growth in the health services sector.  The overall state unemployment rate is currently 4% and the unemployment rate in Seattle is 3.4%.  As of the end of February, the Washington state Unemployment Insurance (U.I.) Trust Fund balance was $4.56 billion. As of January 2019, Washington has enough in the U.I. Trust Fund to pay out between 15.7 and 16.4 months of benefits. Compared to other states, Washington is #13 in terms of trust fund solvency.  Mark Johnson asked when the next recession will be, and Steven explained that there’s no way to know for sure. ESD is creating an economic alert system that will provide signals to alert the agency to upcoming changes, but even with this system, it’s difficult to predict when the next recession will occur.  Steven mentioned that the agency’s next Economic Symposium will be on Monday, April 1st at the Bell Harbor Conference Center in Seattle. At this event, ESD will address key economic and workforce development issues that affect all industries and sectors. Speakers include, but are not limited to, ESD Commissioner Suzi LeVine, Employment Connections Director Kelly Lindseth, and ESD regional economists Ajsa Suljic and Anneliese Vance-Sherman. Over 200 people have already registered for the event.  **Closing comments**  Attendees suggested some topics for upcoming ESAC meetings, including:   * An update on ESD’s new strategic plan. * An overview of the bills that passed in the 2019 legislative session that affect ESD. * An update on Career Connect. |
| **2019 meetings** |

The remaining 2019 Employment Security Advisory Committee meetings are scheduled for 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. at the ESD headquarters in Olympia on:

* Monday, May 13th
* Monday, July 22nd
* Monday, October 21st